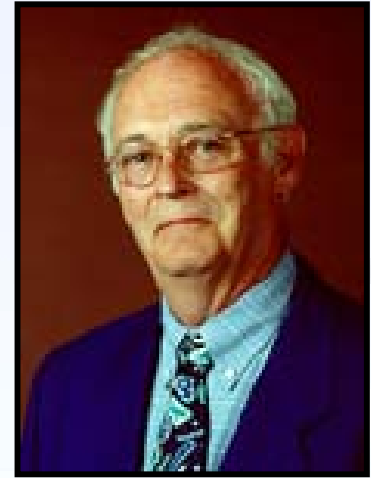


# **Marion Co. ATC Principal Howard Carey to Retire With 30 Years of Experience**



**MARION COUNTY AREA  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

**“Honestly, the best part about teaching is to watch students succeed. We have a chance to change and redirect lives. And, if you don’t have that as a golden rule, you really aren’t a teacher.”**

After 20 years in the classroom and the last 10 years serving as principal of the Marion Co. ATC, Howard Carey will officially retire on June 30, 2006. Carey is one of an existing group in career and technical education to have spent all of his years at the same area technology center. He is thankful and feels blessed to have been in a position to offer students a chance to succeed – in what many consider the “old” traditional vocational technical education style. In those 30 years, Carey has been able to watch many students become successful in life because of the opportunities afforded to them through the caring hearts of their teachers and principal.

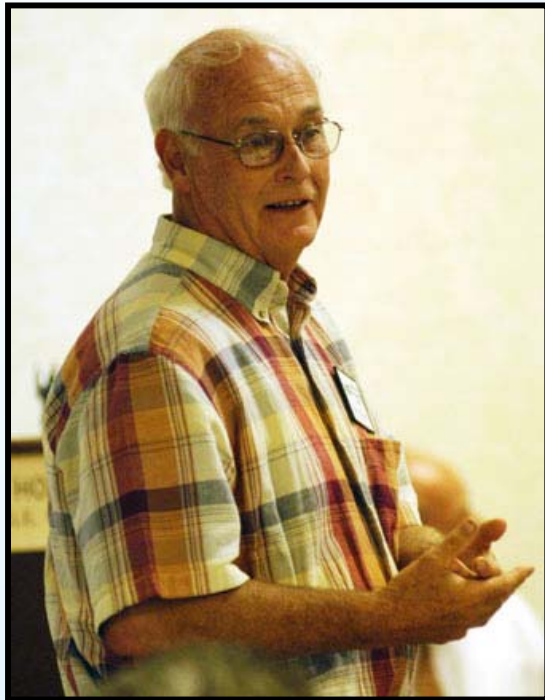
“Honestly, the best part about teaching is to watch students succeed. We have a chance to change and redirect lives. And, if you don’t have that as a golden rule, you really aren’t a teacher,” says Carey. “To me, kids are just as good as they ever were. But, in many cases, they don’t have the parental support they need to succeed in life. However, I think this gives the vocational instructor a greater ability to help students understand the importance of self-esteem and building a good work ethic.”

For Carey, life didn’t begin easily. He is one of five children and almost didn’t make it through the first year of his life. Born in Louisville, he was less than 3 lbs at birth. By the time he was six months old, he had not gained much weight. The doctor’s didn’t give the family much hope that he would survive.

“I’m so fortunate to be alive,” says Carey. “When I was a year old, they could wrap a dollar bill around my waist. The doctors visited daily and thought I wouldn’t make it. I probably would not have made it had it not been for our next-door neighbor, a man of German descent. He had checked on me regularly and one day told my parents that he knew of a way to help me gain weight. He told my parents to put some brown German beer in my bottle. At wits end, my parents were willing to try anything because nothing the doctors had suggested worked. So, they did and I gained weight. It was a miracle and to this day, I do not drink beer.”

**Carey was the first-born son and his father was absolutely relieved when he started gaining weight and becoming healthy. In fact, Carey was the apple of his father's eye and the bond that developed between father and son was so strong that his father would take him to work with him. His father owned a shop in Springfield. He was known far and wide for his outstanding work.**

**"My father, who was a auto body repairman, taught many people the art of auto body repair and painting. He was undoubtedly one of the best welders that I have ever seen and he taught me a valuable trade. My father was respected so much, people used to come to work for him for free so that they could see a master at work. Once they learned the trade, they would go out into industry to get a job. My father helped many people."**



**When Carey was 8 years old, he was doing bodywork on cars. His father had also taught him how to paint a car. His first paint job was a 1937 Chevrolet Coupe and Howard painted the car black.**

**His father only had a third grade education and always felt that it was more important to work instead of going to school. Carey was not encouraged to go to school and says he only stayed in school because "I met my future wife, Sandra. I was in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and she was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I knew she was the woman I would marry."**

**"I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for Dr. Charles Byers. He has been a great mentor and counselor over the years. I originally attended UK**

and dropped out to come back home to get married. I worked at a local Marion Co. manufacturing company for 10 years. They offered me a position in Dayton, Ohio. I wasn't ready to leave Marion Co. because all of our family was here. So, we parted ways," says Carey.

At the time, he was offered a job from one of the company's competitors based in California – and it meant that he would have to leave Marion Co. While he had no desire to move, the offer perked his interest.

"Well, they offered me \$150,000 a year (this was in 1975) and a house. The money was so enticing that I went and stayed in California for two weeks by myself. Sandra then joined me and while she was there, we started talking about all the things our kids would miss by not being raised in Marion Co. When we were at the airport to come home, we saw Joe B. Hall and during the conversation, he found out we were from Kentucky. A little while later, we were eating at a restaurant at the airport and a single musician came by to ask us what we wanted to hear him play. We said it didn't matter. He played 'My Old Kentucky Home.' It tore us both up and we always wondered if Joe B had told that musician we were from Kentucky. We didn't move to California."

After turning down the position, Carey went into business for himself and was very successful in making a good living for his family. During a dance, a friend told him about the auto body teaching position at school. His wife Sandra encouraged him to pursue the job. He applied for and got the job of auto body instructor.

"My father was not pleased when I became a teacher because he felt that I would make a much better living being in business for myself. He did believe in teaching, but didn't think I should be a teacher because he thought I was losing money," says Carey. "That's true, but I became a teacher because I really did enjoy teaching kids a skill and I wanted to see if I could make a difference."

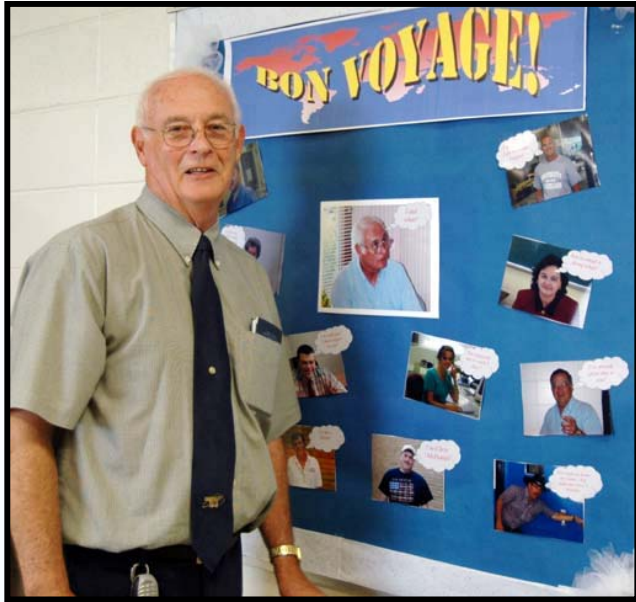


**“During my tenure as a teacher, we would hold VICA competitions. At that time, we were the only school in the region to hold a contest. I asked my father to be one of the judges because he knew the subject matter inside out. It was the first time I had ever been able to get him to come to this school and I had been teaching here for four years,” says Carey. “When the contest was over, my father said, ‘I’ve never liked you being here, but these kids can ‘eak’ out a living on what you are teaching them.”**

**“When I accepted the teaching position at school, it was necessary for me to go back to college to finish my degree. It was during this time that I had the good fortune to meet Dr. Charles Byers and unbeknown to me, he would play a major role in my professional development,” says Carey. “He helped me in getting my Bachelor of Science in Education. I completed my course work at UK in 1981. In later years, he called to encourage me to pursue a master’s degree. I would have never gone back to school had it not been for Dr. Byers. And, I completed my Master of Science in Education in 1997.”**



**Howard Carey and Dr. Charles Byers during Carey’s retirement party.**



**When the KY Tech Leadership Academy was created in 1993, once again Dr. Charles Byers called upon Howard Carey. He encouraged him to fill out an application to apply for the academy. Dr. Charles Byers and Dr. Joyce Logan were in charge of the 15-month leadership development program. The KY Tech Leadership Academy was created to develop leaders to assist in meeting the many challenges of the system.**

**“I think that becoming a member of the academy was an integral part of my professional development. I met people who had common**

**goals and challenges. I graduated with a fine group of individuals and even today; we call on each other for help and advice. It was perhaps the greatest program that has ever been created in the KY Tech System of Schools and I’m glad to have been a part of the whole effort.”**

**Becoming a member of the KY Tech Leadership Academy started a cumulative set of events that eventually led to his applying for the principal’s position at the school. In 1996 when the former principal retired, Carey was in St. Louis attending a technical upgrade training session on automotive vibration and road noise control.**

**“I got a call to say that Mr. Coyle’s job was open and I needed to get to Campbellsville to take the principals’ certification test,” says Carey. “This was on a Friday and the test was Saturday morning. I drove home and was in Campbellsville on Saturday to take the test at 6:00 a.m. I passed the test and got to interview for**

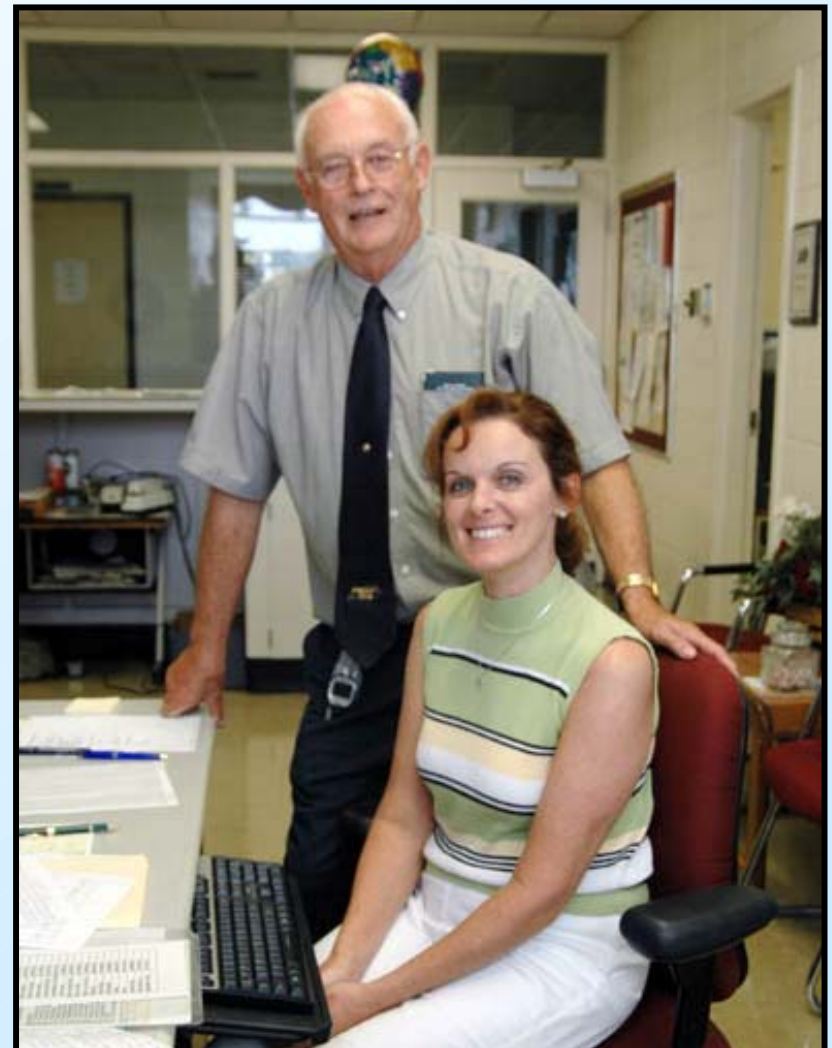
the job. I've been the principal at Marion Co. ATC since 1996. It has been a life changing and rewarding experience. We have all worked hard to make a difference in the lives of our students and I know that without us, some of those students might not be making the living that they are today. It's a good feeling to know that we have succeeded in helping others to get ahead in life. That's what it's all about. ”

Photo at right: Carey and  
Teresa Preston, Administrative Secretary

“Mr. Carey and I go way back because I was a former student at this school. When I was in the business technology program, part of our assignment was to work as a secretary for teachers in this school. I was Mr. Carey's secretary during my senior year. Who would have thought that I would be working for him today? I wish we had more time together. He has been understanding and helpful since I started. He has also tried to pour out as much information as possible in a short period of time. One of the nicest things about Mr. Carey is that he is compassionate and a real family man.

That's heartwarming.”

“In the past 8 years I have gotten to know Howard well. He has worked with me to develop my teaching skills,” says *Machine Tool Technology Instructor Paul Spalding*. “ When I became a father in March of 2004, he was the first one through the door to see my new daughter. His caring and dedication for his staff will be long remembered in the hearts of many. He will be missed”





## Question and Answer Session

### How did you become interested in vocational technical education?

I have always been interested in vocational skills – the hard skills that include trade and industrial. I never went to a baby sitter – I went to the shop with my dad. He taught me how to weld when I was 6 years old and I've made a wonderful living because of what he taught me at an early age. He was really a vocational instructor, but there were no schools in his time. Honestly, I have never been unemployed because I was able to learn the skills that my father taught me.

Later in life, I got involved in the actual vocational technical education field because a friend told me about an opening at the local vocational school. That was 30 years ago and I'm still interested in vocational technical education.

The photo of Jonathan Adam Hughes is on the flag behind Carey. Hughes was a welding student at the ATC who joined the service and was sent to Iraq. He didn't make it home.





**Over the course of the years, what do you see as some of the major changes during the time you have been involved in vocational-technical education?**

**I have been fortunate to witness a true change from the old school vocational training to an updated technical school with state of the art equipment. There have been many changes in technology that have come about over the years resulting in a more technology driven workforce. We are critical in that whole movement. A couple of examples are – we have gone from shorthand to wireless communication. We have gone from the “hands-on” spraying method in auto body repair and painting to “robotic” spray painting in the industry. This is a huge transition from the old days. But, this does not leave out the fact that we still have to teach the hard skills because without these skills, the technology is useless.**

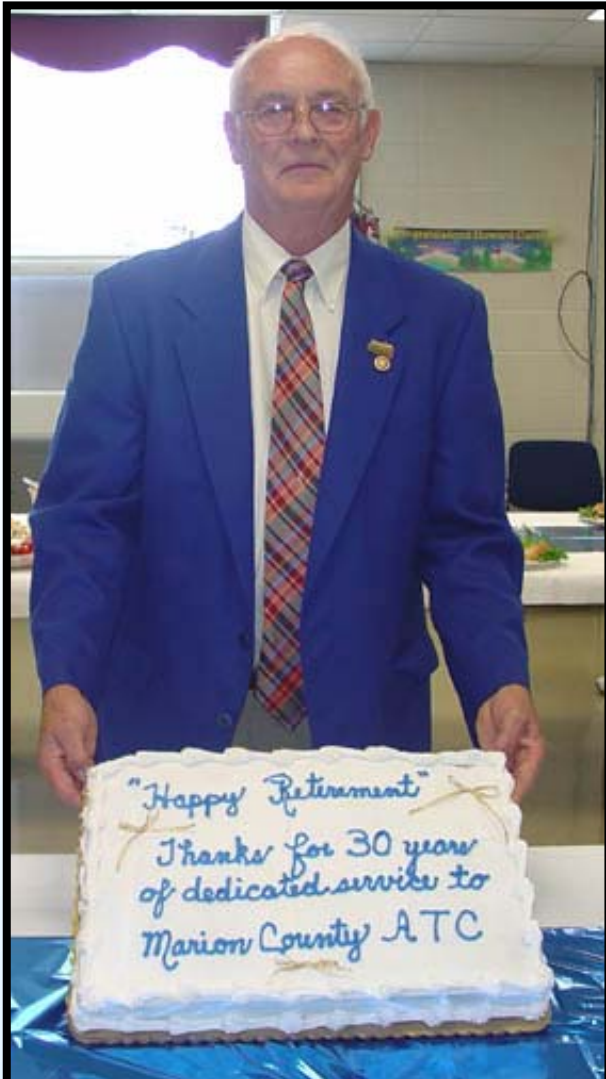
**What do you think people will remember you by?**

**It is my hope that people will remember me by the activities and projects that we have attempted and accomplished together.**

**I would also hope that people know me as a family man. The largest piece in the puzzle of life is my family. They have always been there to hold everything together for me, beginning when I almost didn't make it as a child. My wife has always been by my side during school events. She has rolled up her sleeves and cooked many dinners for numerous people, students and their families. She is a great partner and has always been here. I also believe that principals become a leader of a larger school family. You have to be there for them. I've been fortunate because I've been able to hire all of our instructors except one. I've always told my faculty and staff, be here at work to do your job unless your family needs you. Then, I'll take over for you until you can come back.**

**What do you consider to be your most important contribution in this field during your tenure?**

I know that I have caused some students to stay in school that would have otherwise dropped out. I feel that I have positively affected many students over my 30 years of being involved in vocational technical education.



**Who has made the greatest impression on you over your professional career?**

Without a doubt, it is Dr. Charles Byers. He has been in the background during my entire career. He has given me the confidence to do some things that I would have never tried. Most people don't take the interest in their students the way he has done over the years. He has not only helped me, but he has helped many teachers in this system – as well as students across the state of Kentucky. He has touched many lives and people will always remember how he made them feel. He brings out the best in all of us.

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